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## Sermon on the Gospel for the Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 10, 23—37.

Our Catechism mentions three uses of the divine Law. The first is, that it is to lead us to a knowledge of our sin. "By the Law is the knowledge of sin," Rom. 3, 20. The second is, that it is to teach us what works are pleasing to God and must be performed in order to live honorably. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word," Ps. 119, 9. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," Ps. 119, 105. The third use of the Law is that of keeping the wicked and unregenerate in external discipline. "The Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient," etc., 1 Tim. 1, 9.

These are the uses that the divine Law, according to the Scriptures, has for sinful man. A false and pernicious use, to which the Law is often put by men, *viz.*, that of attempting to merit salvation by fulfilling its commandments, is condemned in to-day's Gospel-lesson, in which Christ teaches that

MAN CANNOT BE SAVED BY THE LAW.

This He shows,

1. *By the sum of the commandments;*
2. *By the parable of the Good Samaritan.*

1.

It might seem at first sight that Christ is here teaching salvation by the Law. For when the lawyer asked Him: "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He points him to the Law, saying: "What is written in the Law? How readest thou?" And when the lawyer has quoted correctly the sum of the Law, He tells him: "This do, and thou shalt live." Is that not plainly teaching him: Keep the Law, and you shall go to heaven?

It does indeed seem so at first sight. But it only seems so. In fact Christ means to inculcate just the opposite. To understand His

words correctly we must bear in mind to whom He was speaking, and why He was speaking as He did. It was a lawyer, one of the Jewish teachers, who sought salvation in the works of the Law. And moreover we are told that this lawyer asked Him this question: "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" in order to tempt Him. He was therefore not in search of information. He did not ask the question because he was troubled in his mind about this all-important subject. No, he imagined he knew all about it. He was only trying to catch Christ in His words; he wanted to extract an answer from Him which he and his comrades might construe into an accusation against Him. He expected that Jesus would tell him that he could not be saved by the Law, for He had before this reproved the lawyers and Pharisees for their misinterpretation and misapplication of the Law. (See the Sermon on the Mount.) And if Christ should answer his question thus, then he would have a good accusation to bring against Him, because the leaders of the Jews, together with most of the Jewish people at that time, trusted for their salvation in their fulfillment of the Law.

But Jesus, who "knew what was in man," saw the trap which the lawyer had set for him, and avoided it. Instead of denying his ability to save himself by the Law, He points him to the Law. "What is written in the Law?" "This do, and thou shalt live."

Now that does mean indeed: If you do this, if you fulfill this Law of God perfectly, you shall live by it. For perfect fulfillment of the Law would take a man to heaven. "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do he shall live in them," Lev. 18, 5. For although a man could never merit heaven by his fulfillment of the Law, because God owes us nothing in return for what we can do for Him, since He has repaid us a thousandfold before we do it, yet if a man would render a complete and absolute fulfillment of His Law, there would be nothing to keep him out of heaven, which God has, out of love, prepared for him from eternity.

But this answer of Jesus to the lawyer's question also means: You have not done these things. You have not loved your God with all your heart and soul, nor your neighbor as yourself, and therefore you cannot live by your fulfillment of the Law. It means: You know that you have not kept this. You know that your fulfillment of the Law is only external, that it has consisted merely in the washing of hands and cups and in giving tithes and other outward observances, most of which is not even commanded at all in the Law, but merely enjoined by the ordinances of the elders. You know that your pretended fulfillment of the Law has not touched your heart, has not flowed from love to God or neighbor. And so by your own verdict you stand condemned. You have not fulfilled the Law, and therefore cannot live by it.



Thus Christ shows the lawyer from the sum of the commandments that he cannot be saved by the deeds of the Law. And the lawyer's case is our own and everybody else's case. Man cannot be saved by his fulfillment of the Law, because he does not and cannot love the Lord, his God, with all his heart and soul and strength, nor his neighbor as himself.

## 2.

The lawyer felt the rebuke that lay in the Savior's words, and he also had to concede its justice in his mind. But he was unwilling to acknowledge his defeat, and so he made an attempt at justifying himself. He therefore asked Jesus another question: "And who is my neighbor?" He felt that he could not successfully meet Christ's contention with regard to the First Table of the commandments, that he must acknowledge his failure to love God as he ought. But he imagined that in regard to the Second Table his case was not so desperate, that Christ would be unable to show that he had not loved his neighbor in accordance with the demands of the Law. And so, in order to divert attention from the first point, he asks Him the second question: "Who is my neighbor?" thinking, of course, that Christ would mention as his neighbor his friends, relatives, and acquaintances of his own people, and that he would then be able to say: I have always loved and served them, and you must, therefore, concede that I have kept the Law and am fit for heaven.

But instead of giving the answer which the lawyer had expected, Christ tells him the parable of the Good Samaritan, by which He showed Him that not only our friends and relatives are our neighbors, but that also our enemies are included under this term, for the Jews and the Samaritans, as you are no doubt well aware, were bitter and irreconcilable enemies. Christ here teaches, then, that if we would keep the Second Table of the Law, we must also love our enemies as ourselves, must be willing to serve and to aid them, even with our own inconvenience, yes, with jeopardy to our own life. He inculcates the same lesson, then, which in the Sermon on the Mount He had expressed thus: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you," Matt. 5, 44. 45. To appreciate the full force of this injunction, we must remember that the Jewish teachers of the time had misconstrued such injunctions of the Old Testament as: "Thou shalt love thy brother, but hate thine enemy," Matt. 5, 43, and: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," Ex. 21, 24, into a justification of private hatred and revenge upon one's personal enemies, while the former was merely directed against the wicked heathen enemies and persecutors of God's people in the Old Testament, and the latter had reference only to judicial punishments of injuries. Against this misconstruction of Old Testament injunctions Christ, then, sets up here His correct interpretation of the Second

Table, enjoining love also of one's enemies as a requisite for the fulfillment of this table.

And by this explanation of the Second Table, as given here in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus tells the lawyer: You have not even kept this Second Table of the Law; you have not loved your neighbor as yourself, and you cannot so love him. You know that you only loved and served your relatives and friends, that you have not even felt under obligation to love also your enemy. You thought that it was your privilege, and even your duty, to hate the latter and to take revenge upon him. You see, then, how utterly wrong you have been in your understanding of this second Great Commandment, and how far you have failed in keeping it, yes, and how impossible it is for you ever to keep it.

And if you have not kept, and cannot keep, the Second Table, how much less, then, can you fulfill the first! If you do not, and cannot love your neighbor as yourself, how much less do you, and can you, love your God with all your heart and soul and strength and mind! "For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" 1 John 4, 20.

To repeat it, my dear hearers, the lawyer's case is our own. We cannot keep the Law of God. We do not and cannot love our enemy as ourselves; we cannot, therefore, keep the Second Table, much less the First Table of the commandments. We cannot love our God with all our heart and all our soul and all our strength and all our mind; we cannot love our neighbor as ourselves. It is vain for us, therefore, to seek salvation in our fulfillment of the Law, and so we must look for salvation elsewhere. Jesus fulfilled the Law for us, every jot and tittle of it; He atoned for our transgressions of the Law by His suffering and death. Let us flee to Him. Clothed in His righteousness, we can stand before God and enter heaven. From Christ's answer to the lawyer: "This do, and thou shalt live," which must condemn us because we cannot comply with its demand, let us therefore turn to Paul's answer to the jailer: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Amen. G. L.

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### Sermon on Prov. 22, 6.

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Education—everybody sings its praises. It is thought by most people to be the key to the attainment of wealth and every kind of happiness; the cure for all kinds of evil; the means of delivering men from physical servitude and spiritual bondage; the guide that will lead all men into the paths of righteousness and thus eliminate the evils of society, make the nation glorious, make all mankind happy, and render the world a paradise.



Our text appears to justify this notion when it says: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." To train a child in the way he should go is education. And if all men would walk in that way and not depart from it, there can be no doubt that everything would be loveliness, peace, and happiness. It is but right, therefore, that all men should long for an education, and that it should be the highest ambition of parents to give their children a good education.

But, of course, it will be admitted that, if we are to attain these blissful ends by means of education, we must, in the first place, know wherein true education consists. According to our text it consists in training up a child in the way he should go. But in order to do this we must, of course, know exactly what is the right way for him to walk in. And, furthermore, it will be admitted to be necessary for us, or for someone, for those who are to do the training, to know just how, by what means and methods, a child may be trained to walk in the way he should go, and never to depart from it. That is the problem.

And it is already here in the premises where most people fail. To most people education is merely instruction, merely the imparting and acquiring of a large amount and great variety of knowledge. However, it is but natural that this will not have the desired effect. If you want to work an engine under high pressure, your attention must not be given merely to generating a large amount of steam, but your first attention must be given to the boiler, to see that that is of the right character and of sufficient strength to be capable of sustaining a high pressure, otherwise the generation of steam will be dangerous. Thus in education, of first and highest importance is the formation of character, otherwise the acquisition of knowledge itself will be a source of danger. The more you educate a rogue, the more dangerous will he be.

But how about our national educational system? Does not that meet the requirements of a true education? And is it not showing its effects in the betterment of the moral condition of our race? It is true that in this country much attention is given to, and immense sums of money are expended in the interest of, education. But it is also a well-recognized fact that results are not what has been and still is expected. Crime, strife, selfishness, class-hatred, and all social evils are increasing. Neither the public schools nor the Sunday schools have been successful in bringing about a state of universal rectitude, peace, and happiness. It is evident, therefore, that the problem is still unsolved, or that at least the solution is not known to many, that the one thing most needed is still lacking in our educational system. Let us inquire more closely into the question what this one thing may be. — The question is:

WHAT IS MOST NEEDED IN THE EDUCATION OF OUR  
CHILDREN?

Let me show you,

1. *Why the public school and the Sunday school have not solved the problem, and present to you,*
2. *The Scriptural solution of the problem.*

1.

The public school and the Sunday school, the combination which has in hand the bulk of the work of educating the youth of this country, have signally failed in attaining the end of true education, that of so leading the youth into the path of righteousness that in their later life they may not depart from it. This has been publicly acknowledged by many who are in a position to judge and whose judgment is worthy of consideration. Dr. J. G. Schurman, President of Cornell University, said some years ago: "It (the present) is a generation which has no fear of God before its eyes; it fears no hell; it fears nothing but the criminal court, the penitentiary, and the scaffold. To escape these ugly avengers of civil society is its only categorical imperative, the only law with which its Sinai thunders. To get there and not get caught is its Golden Rule. To 'get rich quick,' financiers of this age will rob the widow and orphan and grind the faces of the poor, speculate in trust funds, and purchase immunity by using other people's money to bribe legislators, judges, and magistrates. And then we hear the praises of poor boys who have become millionaires! O God, send us men of honor and integrity!" Prof. Wm. James, of Harvard, in an address at Chicago University, said that half a century ago public-school education in this country was looked to to eliminate ignorance and vice from society. This hope had been disappointed, he said, for our "schools and colleges increase crime by developing intellects which, in many cases, have criminal tendencies." Education, he declared, has freed us from "the more brutal forms of crime," but has "put even meaner crimes in our way." Governor Vardaman of Mississippi, in one of his messages to the legislature, calls attention to the fact that, according to the census, the negroes who are able to read and write commit more crimes than the illiterate. In New England, he says, only 21.7 per cent. of the colored population are unable to read and write, while in the so-called black belt of the South 65.7 per cent. of them are illiterates. And yet in the New England States the negroes furnish a far greater proportion of the total number of criminals than do those of the South. From this the governor very aptly draws the conclusion that the education of the negro must be wrong in principle. But what he says of the education of the negro applies with equal force to that of the white race. Dr. McDonald, of the United States Bureau of Education, who enjoys a very high reputation for professional efficiency, in a report submitted to Congress,



finds as the result of an investigation, that in New England, where the average term of schooling is six years and the average of illiteracy 6 per cent., the ratio of crime, nervous disorder, etc., is much higher than in the South Atlantic States, where the term of schooling is less than three years, and the average illiteracy nearly three times greater than in New England. Most significant of all, though, as it is most discouraging, is the proof that the proportion of *juvenile* criminals in New England is 425 to the million, while in the South Atlantic States it is only 126. Moreover, this contrast becomes all the more significant when we consider that the temptations of poverty are far greater South than North. The newspaper that relates these figures from Dr. McDonald's report adds: "These figures should set our authorities to thinking. We spend hundreds of millions every year on free education, and other hundreds of millions in the effort to punish and suppress crime. The question is whether our scheme is intelligent — whether there may not be a better way. Surely, if crime and degeneracy keep pace with free-school education, and virtue and wholesomeness prevail in an inverse ratio, the fact is worth considering." This summer (1907) the National Educational Association, a large society of educators and teachers, held their convention at Los Angeles. This association adopted resolutions in which severe accusations are raised against the schoolboys and school-girls of this country, saying that they are inclined to disregard every established authority, that they have no respect for age and superior knowledge, that they are deficient in the sense of duty and are more inclined to follow the enticings of pleasure and profit than the requirements of duty and order. These are grave charges. But the association does not inquire into the causes of this condition, nor does it offer a remedy. However, let us do so.

Why is it that the public schools fail so completely in performing the task of true education? It is, because their aim is not to train, but merely to instruct. Their teachers are not really educators, but merely instructors. The truth of this is borne out in a circular letter issued by the Association of Woman Principals of Public Schools of New York City, about two years ago, declaring that our public schools are "huge barracks, mere parodies on the spirit of the true school, where the individual child is a mere number, where no one has time for human sympathy and kindly personal influence, and where the preparation of statistics and reports, and not the upbuilding of character, has become the chief duty of the principal." The complaint is justified, but it cannot well be helped, because the public school lacks the one means that is really effective in the formation of a right character, which is a correct moral training.

This deficiency in our national educational system is very generally recognized, and the attempt is made to supply it in the Sunday school. But the Sunday school is a mere makeshift. How can any

effectual training be done in the short space of time allotted to the Sunday school, which is just sufficient to give a little instruction in religious truths, and that very meagerly and superficially, and the work being done by volunteers, and not by trained teachers? And how can it be expected that the influence over a child that may possibly be gained in this short space of time will predominate over that under which the pupil is placed all the rest of the week?— Besides, the training influences most generally employed in the Sunday schools of the land are about the same as those of the public schools, the incentive to right conduct being not a moral sense of duty and responsibility, but competition, ambition; not the ambition to be faithful in the performance of duty as in the sight of the Lord, with a desire to please Him out of love, though men do not observe you, but the ambition to excel above others and to have one's excellence acknowledged and praised, "with eye-service, as men-pleasers." The desire for recognition and reward is the motive power. And this spirit is stimulated and fostered by the methods of training employed in the public schools and in most of the Sunday schools. The result of such training is, that the child when it grows older will walk in the way of righteousness and duty only when "it pays," when he may expect to have his ambitions satisfied thereby, and that he will just as readily depart from the right path when his ambitions can better be served in that way, whenever that pays better. Thus the Sunday school, instead of improving the slight opportunity it has for influencing character in the right direction and employing the time to the best advantage, rather exercises a baneful influence in the formation of the character of our men and women.

These, then, are the reasons why our educational system as represented by the state schools and the Sunday schools proves a failure as regards the bettering of public morals. They fail, because they do not build moral characters. What is lacking in their system of education is that which can make such characters. That is the thing most needed in the education of our children. And what may that be? It is indicated in the words already quoted from President Schurman in which he ascribes the low moral status of the present generation to the fact that it "has no fear of God before its eyes." And the source from which alone relief can be expected is also indicated in his exclamation: "O God, send us men of honor and integrity!"

## 2.

Education is a great thing, a valuable thing; it is, indeed, absolutely necessary to success. If any one is to be a civil engineer, or a lawyer, or a physician, or even a bricklayer or a carpenter, or anything else, no matter how talented he may be and how well-gifted by nature for any particular calling, still he will need a training, an education, to fit him to work successfully in any calling. Now,



for any of these callings a man may have a natural aptitude, and yet he needs a training in order to become efficient. How much more is an education, a training, necessary in order to make of children moral, religious, God-fearing men and women, for which they have no natural aptitude, because "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," and "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," and "there is no fear of God before their eyes." Therefore Luther said truly that "the absence of schools will result in a wild, desolate, and devilish condition of things; again, a good school is the foundation of order and prosperity in the state." But by a "good school" Luther does not mean an irreligious school, but a Christian school, that gives its pupils a moral training based on the Christian religion. For, as Scripture says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people," and, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." A moral, religious training, then, is what is most needed in the education of our children in order to make them not only heirs of the heavenly kingdom, but also useful men and women and good citizens. The fear of the Lord alone will accomplish this; not the fear of bondage, the fear of a slave, but that fear which is coupled with filial piety and love, the fear of a child. Our children must learn to fear and love God, and in that way be trained up in the way they should go, and then, when they grow older, they will not depart from it. Therefore the Apostle Paul says: "Ye fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

But it is true also that only God can give us men of honor and integrity. Men are not naturally inclined to fear and love God, and to be prompted in all their doings by such fear and love. "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." A change of heart is therefore required, a new creation, a regeneration, a work which only the almighty God can perform. But He does it only by His appointed means, His own Word. This He wants to have applied; therefore He says: "*Train up* a child in the way he should go;" and, "Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." He knows that this means will be most effective in the days of youth, when the character is more open to outside influences, before the sinner is become set and hardened in his sinful ways and propensities. Therefore He says: "*Train up* a child!"

Here, then, we have the Scriptural solution of the problem, the divine answer to the question what is most needed in the education of our children. By means of instruction and admonition from the Word of God, by means of a training based not upon the demands and threats of the Law, but on the sweet, persuasive, heart-renewing teachings of the Gospel, they are to be led to fear and love God and let that be the governing principle of all their actions.

But the next question is, How is this to be accomplished? Some

say the Sunday school must do the work. But we have already seen that, aside from other defects that render the Sunday school incompetent for the task, the limitation of time alone is sufficient to put it out of consideration. Others, therefore, have urged instead that the reading of the Bible be introduced into the course of the public schools. But neither is this plan feasible, for THE BIBLE HAS NO PLACE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL. The Bible is essentially a religious book. It cannot be read as mere literature, without taking account of its religious teachings. What would you think of the study of any other literary production without taking any notice of the thoughts, doctrines, views, and opinions conveyed by the author? Do you study the mere words and grammatical structure of a book without taking notice of the contents? If such a thing were possible, would you call it literary study? Interpretation unquestionably is the essential thing in literary studies. The Bible therefore cannot be made a subject of study as literature in the public schools without interpretation, that is, without introducing the teaching of religion, and that is prohibited by our Constitution.

But, it is replied, the Bible is undenominational, and so that teaching in the public schools could also be undenominational. Let it be admitted that the Bible is undenominational (so is the Christian religion itself). But what does that mean? It means that there is but one true interpretation of the Bible, and that, consequently, every other interpretation is false. What is the value of any book that does not clearly convey its meaning, but is capable of being variously interpreted? A law that is worded so as to admit of various constructions and interpretations to suit interested individuals is worthless, and the writer of such a book and framer of such a law exposes himself to severest censure, in fact, he manifests himself as a man unworthy of confidence or of any regard for truthfulness and sincerity. You cannot make a graver, a more disparaging, discrediting, dishonoring charge against any book, and against the Bible in particular, than to say that it is capable of various interpretations and that two contradicting or opposing interpretations may both be correct. If that were true, everybody would be justified in rejecting the Bible as the guide of faith and life. But it is not so. The Bible teaches one truth, and teaches it so that it can be known and understood. Denominationalism has no justification in the Bible. Denominationalism is simply a matter of believing or disbelieving the doctrines derived from the true interpretation of the Bible.

But, it is argued, denominations agree in essentials. Let these be taught in the public schools. If only those parts of Bible-doctrine are to be taught in which all denominations agree, there would be very little to teach. Truth, particularly the truth of the Bible, is a unit, and error in one part must affect the whole and every other part.



And besides, we who believe in the divinity of the Bible, can we expect that the treatment of the Bible as mere human literature will serve to elevate it in the eyes of the children, and of men in general? Will that not necessarily have the effect of placing the Bible, in the opinion of teachers and pupils, on the same level with all human literary productions? How, then, can we surrender this our treasure to such treatment, to interpretation by teachers inexperienced in the teaching of religion, many of whom hold a different view of the very origin and purpose of the Bible than we do, and whose religious teachings, as in everything they teach and explain, must reflect their own personal opinions or convictions? No, such an arrangement cannot be permitted.

But to you, my hearers, let me say this: What is needed in the education of your children is offered you in your own parochial school. There the whole training of your children is governed by the Word of God. Children are there taught to fear God, always to remember that they walk before Him who sees all, before whom nothing is hidden, who reveals and judges the secret things of men, who knows every word on our tongue, to whom the heart of man is an open book. There they are also taught to love God. They learn how He has proved Himself to them a kind and loving Father, and especially how His love prompted Him to deliver up His own Son to be their Savior and Redeemer. They learn how Jesus Christ, out of unspeakable love, sacrificed Himself for them on the cross, in order to save them from eternal perdition, and they are thus moved to love Him in return, and are made willing to serve Him and to do His will and the will of the Father. And they learn what is His will. They are trained to always regard His will as their only rule of conduct, by which they must be governed under all conditions. And thus they learn how to use also the secular knowledge that is there imparted to them for the benefit of their fellow-men and to the glory of God.—You, my friends, have such a school. Use it! It offers to you the one thing that is most needed in the education of your children; it offers the only solution of this educational problem, unless you want to take the whole education of your children into your own hands, and then it is a question whether you are capable of training your children so that you can dispense with the services of the school. Your church has established this school for your convenience. Do not think that you can do without it.

All churches ought to maintain such Christian schools,—it is really their duty,—in their own interest and in the interest of the state. For it will be admitted by everyone that a true Christian is always also a good citizen. And true Christians must be trained, and therefore Christian schools are the best feeders of the church. As Luther says, speaking of Christian schools: “Whenever schools increase, the Church will flourish and will remain good and true, if

the doctrine be pure. Young scholars are the seed of the Church, and students its irrigating streams. For the sake of the Church Christian schools must be kept and maintained." Those churches, therefore, that do not maintain such schools are evidently neglecting a sacred duty. And those who are responsible for such neglect will no doubt have to answer for it some day. But how much more will you then have to answer for if you who have the opportunity do not use it, and if by your neglect your child should go astray! True, God can bring him back to the right path without your care, but that does not relieve you from your responsibility. God has entrusted the child to your care, and commanded you to train him in the way he should go, to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Oh, let us recognize the great blessing bestowed on us in our parochial school and let us show our gratitude by using it diligently. And may the Lord preserve to us this gift and cause our school to flourish and let it be a blessing to many. Amen.

J. F. KARL SCHMIDT.

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## Address at the Burial of Five Victims of a Railroad Disaster.

HEBR. 12, 11.

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No doubt the frightful and shocking disaster in which these our beloved fellow-Christians, with upwards of a score of other fellow-citizens, came to such a sudden and sad end can be traced and attributed to negligence and oversight on the part of some fallible man. In the face of this and many similar calamities under various conditions and in various localities we may give vent to our deeply saddened hearts by uttering the crying petition: Would to God that human lives were valued more in our days and commonwealth! After all, however, this accident, although it was brought about by men, is not an evil stroke of frowning fortune, a mere mishap or fatality, haphazard bad luck, it is a disposition of God's holy and good will. In His love He has chastened us, severely indeed, yet no less wisely and mercifully. If we would have light and comfort in this awful visitation, we must hearken to His voice, and to His voice alone. Our text is both a lamp unto our feet and a healing balm to our heart. It teaches us,—

1. *That the Lord's chastening never seems joyous to us but grievous;*
2. *That, however, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.*

### 1.

When we see the rivulets of tears, and hear the subdued sobs, and listen to the heart-rending sighs, and try to imagine and describe the pangs of the heart which move and overpower us when the Lord



chastens us, we are readily convinced that His visitations are not joyous but grievous. In this all men are alike, the godless, when the Almighty visits them in His wrath, and His true children, whom He chastises with the light rod of fatherly mercy. The former are sad to despair and hopelessness, whereas Christians are grieved, truly grieved, and yet consoled. We are well aware, dear relatives and friends of these victims of the terrible calamity, that God's visitation is extremely painful to you; and since you, the members of Christ's body, are weeping, we cannot but weep with you. You are sad; how could we be heartless, cold, thoughtless? We feel with you. We know all our tokens of love and sympathy can never replace the loss which you have sustained, nor heal the wounds which you have suffered.

This truth, that God's chastenings are not joyous but grievous, seems quite self-evident, then. Just so it is, for all truth is self-evident, yet never superficial or shallow. There is a deep reason for this truth, which the Christian alone knows and which is hid before the eyes of even the wise of this world. The child of God understands why the Lord hides His benign countenance from us at times. It is on account of our sins. And that God, who has become his dear Father in Jesus Christ, should thus severely deal with him, makes him sad, and without any promptings he smites upon his breast and pleads: "God, be merciful to me a sinner! O Lord, it grieves me because Thou thus smitest me, because my transgressions have so sorely offended Thee. Thou hast ever and anon showered upon me the abundance of Thy mercies for my temporal, spiritual, and eternal well-being. But I have been so thankless, so often have I ignored Thy holy will and disobeyed Thy command. I must humbly admit before Thy awful throne I have deserved a thousand times more."

Yet in another respect does every chastisement of God cause us to sigh. There are times when God's ways are past finding out, and when the depths of His knowledge are altogether unsearchable, and when some in their natural blindness will consider and describe them as positively cruel. To be sure, we Christians shudder to think that God would deal with us like a hideous monster, barren of sympathy and feeling. But in the midst of afflictions, especially when the tides of woe and storms of trouble run high, as just in such singular hours of trial as these, even Christians will become perplexed and ask in amazement, "Why, Lord, dealest Thou thus?" And his proud, and precocious, and pert old Adam will cause him an incessant battle towards subduing all impertinent and undue questions as to the wise providence and unfailing love of God in such cases as this one, and to learn to act according to that divine instruction: "Be still and know that I am God." Yea, I am God and thou art but the clay in the potter's hand. Because it is so difficult for him to submit his will to the Lord's, the Christian is filled with sadness. It hurts him to observe how slow he is to admit that God must mean well with him under all conditions and in spite of all that may beset him. It hurts him, because it is so difficult for him to pray with resignation:

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Beloved friends, you are aware, when the chastenings of God seem grievous to a Christian, he finds no fault with God, but all fault with himself.

## 2.

Our text continues: "Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Apparently that is a good fruit of God's chastening, that it worketh in us sorrow over our sinfulness and our tardiness in submitting ourselves resignedly to the ways of God. That is godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. Every possibility to help a man is cut off whenever he fails to come to such knowledge and repentance. On the other hand, if this were the only fruit of God's trials, then our lot would be unbearable beyond description, there would be no relief for us in our distress.

The writer of our text therefore declares it a "peaceable" fruit for such as are exercised by these visitations of God. It is God's plan to bring His children, even though He reprimands and disciplines them, to peace, that sweet peace which passeth all understanding. The thought of their frowardness over against the love of God and their inflexibility over against the will of God prompts them to gladly accept the forgiving grace of God, for they are sorely in need of it. What cheer do the glad tidings of Christ, the Savior for poor sinners such as they, bring to their heart! If they but have the forgiveness of their sins through the redemption of Christ, they are ready to say even in the darkest hours: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!" This Gospel assures them that God's heart is a fire of love and compassion; and if He spared not even His own Son, He can only mean well with them in their affliction. And even though their beloved ones should so suddenly be torn away from the land of the living, their death cannot be termed a terrible one, for whether we live or whether we die we are the Lord's. Christians are always and under all circumstances at peace with God through their dear Lord Jesus Christ.

The chastening of God yields in all Christians also a fruit of righteousness. In the days of tribulation we learn lessons in righteousness which we would fail to learn at other times. Just in such hours Job uttered that wisdom of God: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." An extremely sad visitation it is indeed which has befallen these weeping friends and brethren, which has come over this congregation. But dare any one deny that it will and must bear fruits of righteousness? Has not every one in our midst seen vividly in these days that our life is like a tale that is told, that the distance from laughter to tears, from life to death, from innocent pastime to the grave is but a step? Has not many a Christian in consequence learned to pray: "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"? Have we Christians not resolved with God's grace to be better pre-



pared than ever to meet our God at any time? Have we not been strongly reminded of some such words as these:

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see;  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!?

Will not this catastrophe prompt many of us to attend to the preaching and meditation of God's Word more diligently and studiously than we have been doing, to be more devout and regular in prayer, more exact in the walks of daily life, more speedy in fulfilling our promises and vows made unto the Lord, more satisfied and contented with our lot, more patient in well-doing and in suffering? It cannot be otherwise, because the Lord has so declared.

Let us learn to value this truth, and let us believe that the grievous chastenings of God afterward yield a peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Then will we go home with the comforting assurance that God has thoughts of peace and not of sorrow over us. God grant us such faith! Amen.

OTTO C. A. BOECLER.

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## Outline for Gospel of Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 17, 11—19.<sup>1)</sup>

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On the success or failure of an undertaking depends largely the estimate that the world makes of it. The commander who braves many hidden dangers in his effort to dislodge a foe and is successful, is lauded as an undaunted hero, but he who pursues a like course with the result of sacrificing life and property to no effect, is stigmatized as a hare-brained fellow who places little or no value on the lives of his men. The dishonest means that the merchant employed in effecting a successful speculation are little thought of, while the failure of a second merchant is pointed out as the just punishment for using means in themselves no more questionable than those used by the successful and, therefore, honored speculator. In short, the exaltation that results from success throws a glamor over the means by which that success was arrived at; and the disappointment of failure casts a gloom on all the steps that are thought to have led thereto. In the heyday of success the pathway up to it is seen in a roseate hue; in the night of failure, a pall seems to envelope the eyes.—This unjust and unreasonable way of judging comes so natural that we are much tempted to apply it in the work of the Church, and to judge of methods and of means by the results attained. It will, therefore, not be amiss to utilize the Gospel lesson for to-day to discuss the work of the Church in its compass and results. Let our theme be:

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1) May be used for mission festivals.

## PREACHING THE KINGDOM.

This means that,

1. *There is misery to be relieved;*
2. *There is a merciful Savior to give relief;*
3. *There is a wonderful help to be offered;*
4. *There are results gladdening and results saddening.*

## 1.

a. These men in our text were miserable beyond expression. Leprosy—cast out, no help.—This dreadful disease is frequently used as a picture of sin by which man is polluted. Man in sin—what misery! Such misery there is about us and such sinners are to be cleansed.

b. Though these lepers were cleansed, there was still the possibility of their being infected again.—The fact is frequently overlooked that the preaching of the Word is also for Christians. They are cleansed, but the danger of being infected again is not past; in fact, they sin day after day. They are cleansed, but they are still so weak to do the will of the Father, and they are to be strengthened. This part of the work of the Church must not be ignored or underestimated.

## 2.

a. The Savior went out of His way—along the boundary between Samaria and Galilee—to hunt up the poor whom He might help; and He helped the lepers.

b. So the *Savior* brings relief and help to sinners. He is the Sun and Center of Scripture. And He has made provision for every want, so that, though our wants be as diverse as our faces, every one can and should find what he needs. The church that does not preach *Him* is not doing the work of the Church.

## 3.

a. These lepers were helped in an altogether extraordinary and wonderful manner. Show themselves to the priests—though they had been thrust out and there was no indication that their leprosy was of the curable sort or had disappeared!

b. So, in a wonderful manner, is help offered now to sinners. In the Word and Sacraments is the healing that is needed. True, these means may not appeal to reason, but they are the means that God has provided and that faith must grasp.

## 4.

a. These lepers had true faith, which had come from hearing the Word, faith that proved itself in obeying the Master's word. One there was whose faith was persevering and which brought forth other glorious fruit. But the faith of nine was not persevering, and when they were blessed with healing, thoughts of other things filled their hearts.

b. The Word and the preaching thereof still accomplishes great things; but there are many men—often nine to one—who do not heed and persevere. Especially in our mission work do we see this so plainly. But we dare not give up the work that we are to do; our Savior did not.

G. A. R.